

## Commander's Connection



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alicia Prakash

Col. Philip Ruhlman receives Chemical Warfare training in the wing conference room Wednesday.

"Commander's Connection" is a link between Col. Philip Ruhlman, 20th Fighter Wing commander, and the Shaw community. Questions or concerns that can't be resolved through normal channels can be called in and recorded at 895-4611 or e-mailed to [commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil](mailto:commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil).

Callers should leave a name and telephone number in case questions need clarification. Comments of general interest may be published in *The Shaw Spirit*.



I have a concern about the new appointment system that's been instituted at the medial treatment facility.

The only time you can be seen by the doctor is if you call the same day to make a same day appointment. In order to go to an appointment, you need to make prior arrangements with your employer so he can arrange to have someone replace you while you're gone. If you have to call the same day, that doesn't allow time for your boss to work around that.



I apologize for any inconvenience and am happy to note there is an alternative to using the Improved Access Appointing System to make same-day appointments.

You can also request to speak to your provider or your provider's nurse, who can book future appointments.

## Airmen on the street

# What are you doing to beat the heat?

Mrs. Keri, wife of Staff Sgt. Thomas Martell, 609th Air Communication Squadron -- "I'm drinking plenty of water."

Senior Airman Shaquesha Thompkins, 609th Air Intelligence Squadron -- "I am staying indoors in the air conditioning."

Senior Airman Broderick Jones, 20th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron -- "I take breaks and stay hydrated."



## The Shaw Spirit

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# 'Please God, all I want is one more chance'

By Capt. Mark D. Gibson  
20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs chief

The day I died was an ordinary Friday night. How I wish I had taken the car, but I was too cool for the car this particular day. I remember how I jumped on my motorcycle after work and could not wait to get through the main gate to remove the tacky orange and yellow vest and other safety gear the Air Force makes me wear.

When the boss let us go a few minutes early, I shut down my computer and signed out on the board 'staying in the local area.' I was free until 8 a.m. Monday! I ran to the parking lot, excited at the thought of jumping on my bike and being my own boss. Free!

It doesn't matter how the accident happened. I was goofing off - going too fast. Taking crazy chances. But I was enjoying my freedom and having fun. The last thing I remember was passing an old lady who seemed to be going awfully slow or was it the fact I was going 110 mph.

I heard the deafening crash and felt a terrible jolt. Glass and steel flew everywhere. My whole body seemed to be turning inside out. I heard myself

scream as I soared through the air. When I landed I felt my neck crack in several places, indescribable pain.

Suddenly I awakened. It was very quiet and surreal. A police officer was standing over me shaking his head in disbelief and sadness. Then I saw a doctor wearing a long white coat. My body was mangled. I was saturated with blood. Pieces of jagged glass were sticking out all over me. Strange that I couldn't feel anything. Blood was everywhere.

Hey, don't pull that sheet over my head! I can't be dead. I'm an Airman. I've got a date tonight. I'm supposed to grow up and have a wonderful life. The Air Force needs me, my co-workers need me. What will my folks do without me. I haven't lived yet. I can't be dead. Please God, all I want is one more chance!

Strange how I still could not feel anything on the way to, what I thought was the hospital, turns out it was the city morgue, where later I was placed in a stainless steel drawer.

My folks had to identify me. Why did they have to see me like this? Why did I have to look at Mom's eyes when she faced the most horrible ordeal of her life? Dad suddenly looked like an old man.

He told the man in charge, "Yes, he is my son."

The funeral was a weird experience. I saw all my relatives and friends walk toward the casket. They passed by, one by one, and looked at me with the saddest eyes I've ever seen. Some of my buddies were crying. A few of the girls touched my hand and sobbed as they walked away.

Please - somebody - wake me up! Get me out of here! I can't bear to see my mom and dad so broken up. My grandparents are so racked with grief they can hardly walk. My brothers and sisters are like zombies. They move like robots in a daze. No one can believe this. And I can't believe it either. Please God, I'm an Airman in the United States Air Force, they need me.

Please don't bury me! I'm not dead! I have a lot of living to do! I want to laugh and run again. I want to sing and dance. Please don't put me in the ground. I promise if you give me one more chance. God, I'll be the most careful driver in the whole world. All I want is one more chance!

(Editor's note: This article was inspired by the article "Please God I'm Only 17" by Author Unknown and adapted for the Air Force by Capt. Gibson.)

## C R O S S W O R D

## Among the stars ... 5 stars

By 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Tony Wickman  
Alaskan Command Public Affairs

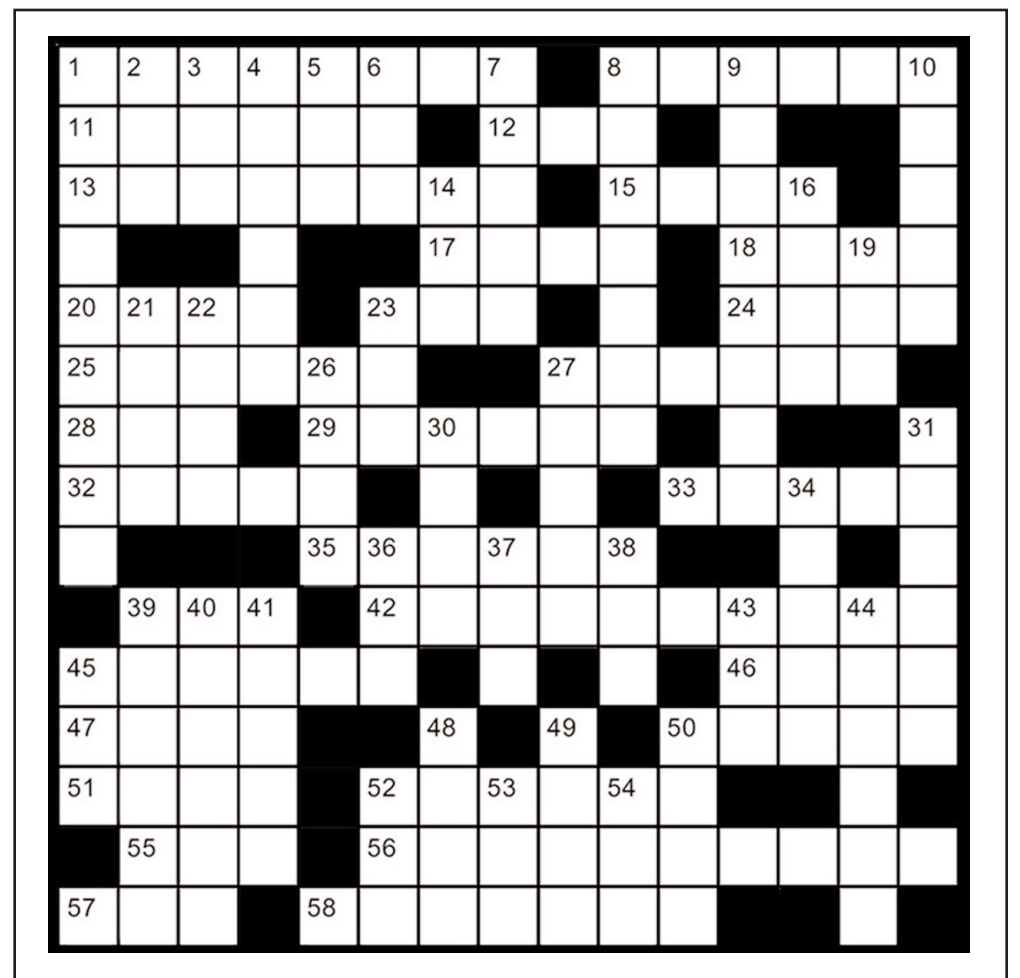
### ACROSS

1. General of the Army
8. Detour
11. Articulated with tip of tongue
12. USAF enlisted report
13. North American silkworm moth
15. Televises
17. African country
18. Part of the leg
20. Lasso
23. Actress Susan
24. Supported
25. Meditation
27. Affable
28. Star Wars character Solo
29. Fleet Admiral of the Navy
32. Fanatic
33. USAF base home to Air Armament Center
35. Most senior
39. Professional b-ball league
42. General of the Army
45. Disaster
46. Fleet Admiral of the Navy
47. Hotel chain
50. Editorial
51. Great Pyramid home
52. General of the Air Force
55. Beige
56. First among all officers of U.S. Armed Forces

57. Israeli machine gun
58. Country of southeast Europe on the Adriatic Sea

### DOWN

1. General of the Army
2. Emulate
3. Wrestler Flair
4. Movie need
5. Vietnamese currency
6. Swiss mount
7. Fleet Admiral of the Navy
8. General of the Army
9. General of The Armies of the United States
10. Endure
14. Frozen water
16. Mets home
19. Sick
21. Spoken
22. Wheeze
23. Federal organization concerned with drugs
26. Thailand river formed by Nan and Ping rivers; \_\_\_\_ Phraya
27. Canadian birds?
30. California town
31. Enthusiasm
34. Heavyweight champion Lennox
36. Zodiac sign
37. USAF SFS quick reaction team



38. Explosive
39. Fleet Admiral of the Navy
40. Desperate attack by Japanese troops in World War II
41. Person from the Orient
43. Approves
44. Captivate
45. Haze

48. Grouch
49. Apostle
50. American Pulitzer Prize writer Ferber
52. Pointed tool for making holes
53. Federal orgANIZATION. concerned with security
54. 52 in old Rome